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10/722,014	11/25/2003	Elizabeth A. Brownholtz	LOT920030034US1	6987

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EXAMINER

DAM, KIM LYNN

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2109

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	01/29/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/722,014

Applicant(s)

BROWNHOLTZ ET AL.

Examiner

Kim-Lynn Dam

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 November 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-40 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-40 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. This office action is in response to the application filed on 11/25/03.

Claims 1-40 have been examined and are pending.

Claim Objections

2. Claims 2 and 12 are objected to because of the following informalities:

Claim 2 ends with a comma after websites, which should be a period in order to be a complete sentence.

Claim 12 cites "set of messages an associated" which does not make sense.

Applicant should consider revising claim to recite "set of messages has an associated".

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, and 38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maurille (USPN 6,484,196) in view of Newman (USPN 7,003,724).

Regarding claim 1, Maurille disclosed a user interface for managing threaded on-line conversations and chronologically displaying a set of messages in a conversation and branch messages corresponding to a message (Abstract, lines 1-5; Column 14, line 61 to Column 15, line 16, Figures 4b-d;). However, Maurille did not specifically disclose a multi-column user interface with a first column for chronologically displaying a set of messages in a conversation and a second column for displaying a branch of messages corresponding to a message selected in the first column. However, Newman disclosed the above limitation (Column 5, lines 3-11; Figure 6). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the teachings of Newman with the user interface of Maurille for the purpose of allowing users to easily view the corresponding threaded messages at more detailed levels and help users be aware of the thread context of each message of a conversation all in one interface (Newman, Column 1, lines 39-47).

Regarding claim 2, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated and further Maurille disclosed wherein each of the set of messages may comprise content selected from the group consisting of text, images, files, links to other documents and links to websites (Abstract, lines 1-5, Figures 4b-d).

Regarding claim 3, the rejection of claim 2 is incorporated and further Maurille disclosed wherein each of the set of message is represented by a name (Figures 4b-d, items 245 and 246).

Regarding claim 7, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated and further Maurille does not specifically disclose a list of participants in the conversation. However, Maurille disclosed a thread participants table (Column 9, lines 15-30; Figure 2, item 148). Maurille also disclosed a conference session where there is a list of participants displayed (Figure 7c, item 776) comprising of participants from the conference table (Column 9, lines 40-55; Figure 2, item 280). Therefore, it is obvious that the system of Maurille is capable of displaying the list of participants in a threaded conversation.

Regarding claim 8, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated and further Maurille disclosed comprising a list of other conversations related to the conversation (Column 14, line 61 to Column 15, line 16, Figures 4d).

Regarding claim 9, Maurille and Newman substantially disclose the invention as claimed. In addition, Newman disclosed a set of navigation buttons for navigating about the branch of messages (Figure 6).

Regarding claim 10, Maurille and Newman substantially disclose the invention as claimed. In addition, Newman disclosed wherein each message in the branch of messages is displayed in a separate region of the second column (Figure 6).

Regarding claim 11, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated and further Maurille does

not specifically disclose wherein each message of the set of messages displayed in the first column has an associated indicator for indicating a quantity of predecessors and successors. However, Maurille does disclose a messages table which stores parent and child messages of threads (Column 8, lines 22-65; Figure 2 items 238 and 240). Therefore, it is inherent that the system of Maurille can display the quantity of predecessors and successors of a message.

Regarding claim 12, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated and further Maurille disclosed wherein each message of the set of messages has an associated in-line reply button (Column 4, lines 28-35; Column 20, lines 16-23).

Regarding claim 14, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated and further Maurille disclosed wherein the first column is additionally represented by a vertical index, and wherein each message of the set of messages is represented in the vertical index at a position proportional to its time stamp in a chronological sequence of the set of messages (Figures 4b-d and 7b).

Regarding claim 15, the rejection of claim 14 is incorporated. In addition, the browser of Newman disclosed wherein the vertical index comprises a navigation aid that allows a user to move forward and backward in time to each of the set of messages (Figure 6).

Regarding claim 16, the rejection of claim 14 is incorporated. In addition, the browser

of Newman disclosed wherein each in a series of user inputs in the vertical index moves the first column one message forward or backward in the chronological sequence of messages (Figure 6).

Regarding claim 18, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated and Maurille disclosed displaying messages authored by a same participant (Column 12, lines 31-40).

Regarding claim 19, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated and Maurille disclosed displaying messages authored by a same participant (Column 12, lines 31-40).

Claims 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, and 38 are the corresponding program product claims for claims 1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. Therefore, they are rejected under the same rationale.

5. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maurille (USPN 6,484,196) in view of Newman (USPN 7,003,724), and further in view of Baker (USPN 6,546,417).

Regarding claim 4, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated and neither Maurille nor Newman disclosed wherein each of the set of messages has an associated content icon indicating a type of content of the set of messages. However, Baker disclosed the above limitation (Abstract, lines 1-6; Column 6, line 59 to Column 7, line 17; Figure 2). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention

was made to incorporate the teachings of Baker into the combined user interface of Maurille and Newman for the purpose of allowing users to easily identify different kinds of messages and contents of a message since the icon indicates the type of file attached (Column 4, line 63 to Column 5, line 5).

6. Claims 13 and 39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maurille (USPN 6,484,196) in view of Newman (USPN 7,003,724) and further in view of Tang et al. (USPN 5,793,365).

Regarding claim 13, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated and neither Maurille nor Newman disclosed wherein each message of the set of messages has an associated author icon. However, Tang disclosed author icons (Abstract, lines 1-17; Figures 2, 4 and 5). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the teachings of Tang into the combined user interface of Maurille and Newman for the purpose of allowing users to easily identify activity levels and availability of participants in order to contact them (Abstract, lines 1-17; Column 3, lines 32-51).

Claim 39 is the corresponding program product claim of claim 13. Therefore, it is rejected under the same rationale.

7. Claims 5, 6, 15-17, 20-27, 29, 31, 32, and 40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maurille (USPN 6,484,196) in view of Newman (USPN 7,003,724) and further in view of Borwankar (USPN 6,594,693).

Regarding claim 5, Maurille and Newman substantially disclose the invention as claimed. However Maurille and Newman do not specifically disclose a conversation map illustrating and aiding navigation of a hierarchy of the set of messages in the conversation. On the other hand, Borwankar disclosed a directory of messages and conversations (Column 11, lines 7-42; Figure 6). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the teachings of Borwankar into the combined user interface of Maurille and Newman for the purpose of allowing users to easily access a structured view of conversations (Borwankar, Column 11, lines 7-42).

Regarding claim 6, the rejection of claim 5 is incorporated and further Borwankar disclosed wherein a display attribute of the conversation map is altered based on a chronology of the set of messages. It is inherent that the directory of conversations and messages will automatically alter upon changing the index directory.

Regarding claim 15, the rejection of claim 14 is incorporated. In addition, the browser of Newman disclosed wherein the vertical index comprises a navigation aid that allows a user to move forward and backward in time to each of the set of messages (Figure 6).

Regarding claim 16, the rejection of claim 14 is incorporated. In addition, the browser of Newman disclosed wherein each in a series of user inputs in the vertical index moves the first column one message forward or backward in the chronological sequence of messages (Figure 6).

Regarding claim 17, Maurille, Newman and Borwankar substantially disclose the invention as claimed. In addition, Borwankar disclosed a third column for displaying hierarchical child messages of a message selected in the second column.

Regarding claim 20, Maurille disclosed a user interface for managing threaded on-line conversations and chronologically displaying a set of messages in a conversation and branch messages corresponding to a message (Abstract, lines 1-5; Column 14, line 61 to Column 15, line 16, Figures 4b-d;). However, Maurille did not specifically disclose a multi-column user interface with a first column for chronologically displaying a set of messages in a conversation and a second column for displaying a branch of messages corresponding to a message selected in the first column. However, Newman disclosed the above limitation (Column 5, lines 3-11; Figure 6). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the teachings of Newman with the user interface of Maurille for the purpose of allowing users to easily view the corresponding threaded messages at more detailed levels and help users be aware of the thread context of each message of a conversation all in one

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interface (Newman, Column 1, lines 39-47). Neither Maurille or Newman disclose hierarchical levels. However, Borwankar disclosed a directory and subdirectory level ((Column 11, lines 7-42; Figure 6). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the teachings of Borwankar into the combined user interface of Maurille and Newman for the purpose of allowing users to easily access a structured view of conversations (Borwankar, Column 11, lines 7-42).

Regarding claim 21, Maurille and Newman substantially disclose the invention as claimed. However Maurille and Newman do not specifically disclose a conversation map illustrating and aiding navigation of a hierarchy of the set of messages in the conversation. On the other hand, Borwankar disclosed a directory of messages and conversations (Column 11, lines 7-42; Figure 6). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the teachings of Borwankar into the combined user interface of Maurille and Newman for the purpose of allowing users to easily access a structured view of conversations (Borwankar, Column 11, lines 7-42).

Regarding claim 22, the rejection of claim 21 is incorporated and further Borwankar disclosed wherein a display attribute of the conversation map is altered based on a chronology of the set of messages. It is inherent that the directory of conversations and messages will automatically alter upon changing the index directory.

Regarding claim 23, the rejection of claim 20 is incorporated and further Maurille does not specifically disclose a list of participants in the conversation. However, Maurille disclosed a thread participants table (Column 9, lines 15-30; Figure 2, item 148).

Maurille also disclosed a conference session where there is a list of participants displayed (Figure 7c, item 776) comprising of participants from the conference table (Column 9, lines 40-55; Figure 2, item 280). Therefore, it is obvious that the system of Maurille is capable of displaying the list of participants in a threaded conversation.

Regarding claim 24, the rejection of claim 20 is incorporated and further Maurille disclosed comprising a list of other conversations related to the conversation (Column 14, line 61 to Column 15, line 16, Figures 4d).

Regarding claim 25, Maurille and Newman substantially disclose the invention as claimed. In addition, Newman disclosed wherein each message in the branch of messages is displayed in a separate region of the second column (Figure 6).

Regarding claim 26, the rejection of claim 20 is incorporated and further Maurille does not specifically disclose wherein each message of the set of messages displayed in the first column has an associated indicator for indicating a quantity of predecessors and successors. However, Maurille does disclose a messages table which stores parent and child messages of threads (Column 8, lines 22-65; Figure 2 items 238 and 240).

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Therefore, it is inherent that the system of Maurille can display the quantity of predecessors and successors of a message.

Regarding claim 27, the rejection of claim 20 is incorporated and further Maurille disclosed wherein each message of the set of messages has an associated in-line reply button (Column 4, lines 28-35; Column 20, lines 16-23).

Regarding claim 29, Maurille, Newman and Borwankar substantially disclose the invention as claimed. In addition, Borwankar disclosed a third column for displaying hierarchical child messages of a message selected in the second column.

Claims 31, 32, and 40 are the corresponding program product claims of claims 5, 6, and 17. Therefore, they are rejected under the same rationale.

8. Claim 28 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maurille (USPN 6,484,196) in view of Newman (USPN 7,003,724) and further in view of Borwankar (USPN 6,594,693) and Tang et al. (USPN 5,793,365).

Regarding claim 28, the rejection of claim 20 is incorporated and neither Maurille nor Newman disclosed wherein each message of the set of messages has an associated author icon. However, Tang disclosed author icons (Abstract, lines 1-17; Figures 2, 4 and 5). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the

invention was made to incorporate the teachings of Tang into the combined user interface of Maurille and Newman for the purpose of allowing users to easily identify activity levels and availability of participants in order to contact them (Abstract, lines 1-17; Column 3, lines 32-51).

Claims 30-40 are the program product claims corresponding to claims 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 17. Therefore, they are rejected under the same rationale.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kim-Lynn Dam whose telephone number is (571) 270-1408. The examiner can normally be reached on M-TH 7:30-5:00, Friday 7:30-4:00.


If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Chameli Das can be reached on (571) 272-3696. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Art Unit 2112



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